

Mr. Joseph Victim
123 State Street
Anytown, USA

January 1, 2003

Dear Mr. Victim:

Thank you for your willingness to participate in a Victim-Offender meeting with the juvenile offender who committed a crime against you. The juvenile offender(s) in your case have been court ordered to participate in VORP. Many young people have commented that the VORP meeting is hardest thing they have to do as a result of their crime because they have to meet face to face with the people they caused harm to and listen to the effects their actions had on real people. During this meeting, you will have an opportunity to ask the juvenile questions about the crime, their court ordered punishments, and probationary terms as well as other questions you may have. The juveniles will have to own up to their actions, offer apologies, and listen to the effects their actions. This process has, nationwide, proven effective in decreasing recurrence of crime. The meeting is scheduled for:

Your VORP meeting is scheduled for:

Wednesday, January 13, 2003

4:00 PM

Emmet County Building
Probate and Family Court- 2nd Floor
200 Division Street
Petoskey, MI

I have also enclosed "Preparing for a Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) Meeting" which explains the meeting process and offers suggestions for meeting preparation.

If you have any further questions, I can often be reached at 231-547-7214 on Mondays and Wednesdays. In Emmet County, I can often be reached at 231-348-1776 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please leave a message if I am unavailable.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Cochran
VORP Coordinator

VICTIM OFFENDER RECONCILIATION PROGRAM

VORP

As its name implies, VORP is an attempt at making whole, a relationship that has been violated by a crime. It has been described as restorative justice versus punitive justice.

It brings offenders face-to-face with the victims of their crimes, with the assistance of a trained mediator. By facing their victims and learning first-hand the effects of their crime, offenders come to realize that they have hurt a real person. Their offense is not simply a property crime or an act against a nameless faceless person. The victim is an individual who has suffered in any number of ways: physically, emotionally, mentally, and financially. Crime is personalized, as offenders learn the human consequences of their actions.

VORP offers victims the opportunity to speak directly to the individual who has hurt them, where they are able to ask the often haunting questions that only the offender can answer, such as: "Why did you do this to me? Was this my fault? Could I have prevented this? Were you stalking or watching me?" With their questions answered, victims commonly report a new feeling of peace of mind. While VORP is voluntary for the victim, it is strongly encouraged. Victims who are initially fearful of the process, often report that the sessions gave them closure and satisfaction. It is not uncommon to see meaningful and sometimes miraculous reconciliation between the parties; part of the freedom inherent in acts of forgiveness.

VORP is usually ordered by the Court as one of the probationary terms for the offender. A VORP representative then contacts the offender to explain the process. Offenders are encouraged to take meaningful responsibility for their actions by first apologizing, and then by mediating a restitution agreement with the victim, to restore the victims' losses, in whatever ways that may be possible. Restitution may be monetary or symbolic; it may consist of work for the victim, community service or anything else that creates a sense of justice between the victim and the offender. Studies show that offenders who participate in this mediation program are less likely to offend in the future, thereby benefiting the entire community.

If you have further questions, concerns, or problems, please call the VORP Director: In Charlevoix County, that number is 231-547-7214. In Emmet County, it is 231-348-1776.